

Crisis in West Africa rooted in decades of colonial rule

BY EMMA JOHNSON

A humanitarian crisis is spreading in the Sahel region of West Africa, affecting the lives of millions of toilers. Over the past few years there has been a sharp increase in operations by various reactionary armed groups, killing thousands of civilians and forcing people to flee their land and homes.

The havoc wreaked in this semiarid region is rooted in colonial and imperialist domination and capitalist relations brutally imposed on centuries-old social relations based on subsistence farming and cattle raising.

This has made it fertile ground for traffickers, bandits, tribal militias, reactionary Islamist groups and profit-lusting capitalists operating in areas where weak governments have no control. Subsistence farmers and herders are left to fend for themselves and try to find

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75 years after Auschwitz: 'Not long ago. Not far away'

BY SARAH KATZ

NEW YORK — This January marked the 75th anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz, the largest and most murderous of the Nazi German forced labor and death camps during the second imperialist world war. Over 1.1 million people were gassed to death — 1 million of them Jews. Two events took place to observe the occasion, one in Israel, and one at the camp in Auschwitz, which today is a national museum in Poland.

Some 200 survivors attended the commemoration at Auschwitz. When the camp was liberated by the Soviet army in 1945 there were 7,000 prisoners at the camp the Nazis had abandoned as they retreated near the end of the war.

"Auschwitz: Not Long Ago. Not Far Away" is the title for the exhibit at the

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Demand gov't act *now* to protect working people!



Above, Radio Santa Cruz; inset, AP Photo/Charles Krupa
Above, Public Health Director Rolando Camejo meets leaders of Cuba's unions, neighborhood and women's groups in Camagüey province March 13 to organize to take on coronavirus threat in workplaces and schools. In revolutionary Cuba, no one is left on their own. Inset, shuttered office in Massachusetts, as more and more governments impose "shelter-in-place," but do next to nothing to organize health care or relief working people need.

A call to action to meet today's unfolding crises

Alyson Kennedy, the Socialist Workers Party candidate for president, issued the following emergency call to action March 18. Malcolm Jarrett is the party's 2020 vice presidential candidate.

SWP STATEMENT

Workers and our unions need to demand that the government *act now* to protect working people and humankind from the devastating consequences of today's intertwined global economic, social, and medical crises.

The capitalist rulers, who are responsible for these breakdowns, must mobilize massive resources to contain and reverse the coronavirus epidemic and treat

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Back strikers' five monthlong battle against Asarco union busting

BY BERNIE SENTER

Five months into their strike, over 1,700 copper miners are standing up against Asarco's union-busting drive. They've kept up picket lines 24/7 and reached out for solidarity and support.

The company, which has three mines — Mission, Ray and Silver Bell — and a smelter in Arizona, and a refinery in Amarillo, Texas, is demanding a four-year wage freeze for most workers after 10 years without a pay raise. It seeks to double or even triple health care costs, freeze pensions and restrict the unions' right to protect workers on the job.

Asarco refuses to bargain with the

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Virus triggers breakdowns, bosses' attacks on workers

BY ROY LANDERSEN

The "solutions" to the coronavirus epidemic being implemented by the capitalist rulers in the U.S. — and other capitalist governments around the globe — are to shut down production, slash jobs and tear apart the

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Protests continue in Iraq against interventions by Iran, Washington

BY TERRY EVANS

After rocket attacks killed three U.S.-led coalition soldiers — two from the U.S. and one from the U.K. — at a U.S. military base in Iraq, Washington retaliated with airstrikes aimed at Tehran-backed militia forces March 12.

The Iraqi government demands Washington withdraw its military from

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SWP presidential candidate says: 'We need to stand up to the bosses'



Militant/Betsey Stone

SWP presidential candidate Alyson Kennedy and nurse Christina Ware talk near San Leandro housing complex where residents are fighting landlord's moves to nearly double their rent.

BY BETSEY STONE

SAN LEANDRO, Calif. — Socialist Workers Party presidential candidate Alyson Kennedy and vice presidential candidate Malcolm Jarrett campaigned at a housing complex here March 11. Residents are fighting against efforts to force them out of their low-rent apartments. The visit was part of five days of campaigning in the San Francisco Bay Area.

The SWP candidates also joined a protest against shutting down the Seton Medical Center in Daly City, just south of San Francisco, and cam-

paigned in other working-class neighborhoods (see accompanying article).

Residents of the Hesperian apartments, a complex of 80 duplex units, say that the new landlord has offered them up to \$5,000 if they move out by April 13. The company plans to "renovate" the apartments and then nearly double the rent to \$2,500 a month. The landlords are pressuring people to take their offer now or risk being forced out without compensation. Some 75 residents joined an outdoor meeting in early February to discuss

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New Zealand: Edwards’ death ‘should never have happened’

BY PATRICK BROWN

AUCKLAND, New Zealand — “This should never have happened,” Hilton Rohe, a retired meatpacking worker, told the *Militant* Feb. 20 in a phone interview. He was talking about the death of fellow union fighter Alfred Edwards, known as Baldy, who was fatally struck by falling boxes of meat in a freezer at the AFFCO meat-works in Wairoa two weeks earlier.

On hearing news of the death, Rohe said, “I put my ‘Union Hard’ T-shirt on” and joined other union supporters to stand “outside the freezer where Baldy died. I confronted the production manager and said, ‘All for the sake of money.’”

The Feb. 28 Militant Labor Forum — “Unions, Workers and the Fight for Safety: No Worker Should Die on the Job!” — took up Edwards’ death and how workers face constant pressure from the bosses to cut corners to meet deadlines or production targets.

“Only by organizing a fighting workers’ movement and using union power can we prevent the bosses from poisoning the air, water and soil around us, and protect the lives and limbs of workers on the job,” forum speaker Mike Tucker of the Communist League said.

The funeral notice posted by Edwards’ family ended with the salute, “Union hard forever.” He was one of the hundreds of Meat Workers Union members who had resisted when AFFCO bosses moved to drive the union out of its eight plants on the North Island.

In response to AFFCO’s locking union members out in 2012 and again in

2015-16, workers in Wairoa — a town of around 5,000 people — set up pickets on the main road. They finally won a new union contract in 2017.

Edwards and his wife Teena, also a worker and union fighter at the plant, were among a group of workers who had met and joined a discussion with Socialist Workers Party vice presidential candidate Osborne Hart when he visited Wairoa in 2016 during a speaking tour in New Zealand.

‘Fight so this doesn’t happen again’

Interviewed on Radio New Zealand’s “First Up” show nine days after Edwards’ death, his son Moana said that he was told that a container of meat “fell on him and squashed him.” His disappearance went unnoticed for more than five hours, in spite of a company rule that freezer hands work in pairs.

“The accident happened in an old part of the meatworks,” Moana Edwards said, describing an area pressed into use to stockpile meat originally destined for the coronavirus-hit Chinese market.

“There was so much stock in there that the pallets were leaning,” Moana Edwards said his father’s co-workers recounted. “They told me they weren’t willing to work while the place was overloaded like that,” so the bosses cut their hours.

“We had the lid to the coffin open so everyone could see” at his funeral, Moana Edwards said. “His whole face was black with freezer burn.”

“We won’t rest until we find out what happened,” he said, and make sure “it doesn’t happen to anybody else.”

London rally backs women’s rights in Sudan



Militant/Pamela Holmes

LONDON — Chanting, “Women’s rights are human rights,” some 50 women and men and their supporters demonstrated outside the Sudanese Embassy here on International Women’s Day March 8, demanding the Sudanese government amend the country’s family law.

“It means women cannot travel without the consent of their husbands,” explained Amal Elshuk, one of the protest organizers. “They might not get custody of their children if there is a divorce.” Participants carried signs reading, “Stop child marriage, Amend family law.”

“The constitution is based on sharia law,” Abdul Hassaballah, a law student from Bolton, in Greater Manchester, told the *Militant*. “And the new government makes too many compromises with the people from the old regime.” He was referring to the transitional government that replaced the tyrannical rule of President Omar al-Bashir last year, after months of protests by working people over living conditions under the impact of years of war.

“I salute women in Sudan who were at the forefront of the struggle to topple Bashir,” Catharina Tirsén, with mic, told participants. She is a supporter of the campaign of Jonathan Silberman, Communist League candidate for London mayor. “As long as women are treated as second-class citizens, we will not achieve the unity needed to advance our struggles.”

— PAMELA HOLMES

Edwards’ death is one of at least 10 workplace fatalities recorded so far this year in New Zealand, in industry, trucking, forestry and on the farm.

Worksafe, the government agency tasked with tabulating injuries and deaths on the job, was set up in 2013 after a firestorm of criticism when 29 workers died in the 2010 Pike River coal mine disaster.

The agency recently recalculated the number of workplace deaths, now reporting 413 workers died between 2013 and 2018, 40% higher than they had admitted previously.

Officials said they had missed many of the 112 workers in transport, warehousing and postal services who died over those years. Almost as many were

killed working on farms, while 71 were killed in construction and 48 in forestry.

The undercounting amounted to “willful blindness,” First Union official Jared Abbott told Radio New Zealand.

In Defense of the US Working Class

by Mary-Alice Waters

“The years that are coming will bring organized resistance — worldwide — by growing vanguards of working people.”

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THE MILITANT

Join fight against cop brutality, killings

Wherever protests against cop brutality and killings occur, the ‘Militant’ covers and supports these fights.

The capitalist rulers use the police to protect their profit system and to intimidate and frame up working people, including use of torture to force “confessions.”



Militant

Jan. 10 Chicago rally demands “Free Gerald Reed!” He was tortured into “confession.”

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Crisis wracks West Africa

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protection with whomever they can.

French imperialism, the former colonial master and historic oppressor of the toilers in the region, has seized on the opening. Paris has beefed up its military presence under the pretext of fighting terrorism, claiming concerns for the security of the civilian populations.

“The enemies of the people are both inside and outside the country,” Thomas Sankara, who led the popular 1983-87 revolution in Burkina Faso and organized working people to take control of their own destiny, said at a rally of several thousand after taking power. “The enemies of the people inside the country are all those who have taken advantage of their social position, of their bureaucratic position, to enrich themselves illicitly. ... They must be combated. We will combat them together with you.”

“The enemies outside the country are there: these enemies are neocolonialism; they are imperialism,” he said.

Today there is no leadership like Sankara provided that seeks to organize toilers in any of the region’s countries.

The epicenter of the crisis is in the Sahel border area of Burkina Faso, Mali and Niger. More than 1 million

people have fled, a fourfold increase in the last year. Thousands of schools and hundreds of health centers have closed. In Burkina Faso alone, an estimated 150,000 people were forced to flee in the last three weeks of February.

Close to 70% of West Africa’s population depends on subsistence agriculture and rearing livestock, often in semiarid territory. The southward spread of the Sahara is wiping out their farming and grazing areas, where tribal and clan ties continue to dominate social relations. As profiteers using capitalist methods penetrate farming and herding, they brutally break up centuries-old practices with devastating consequences.

Roughly 50 million people depend on raising livestock. These marginalized herders are involved in many conflicts.

Capitalists, including military and government officials seeking to enlarge their wealth, have sunk resources in larger herds. Based in the big cities, with no contact with local herdsman, they use hired drovers backed by armed thugs to move cattle intended for sale not consumption — often crossing national borders and grazing with impunity. This intensified overgrazing has dire implications for local livelihoods.



Militant/Marla Puziss

Thomas Sankara, above, led popular revolution in 1983-87 bringing the toilers to power in Burkina Faso. There is no comparable revolutionary leadership anywhere in West Africa today.

These urban capitalists claim the local people, and tribal or religious differences, are the cause of the ensuing conflicts.

‘France get out!’

“The French military is there for security and stability. I don’t have any other interest,” President Emmanuel Macron said at a January summit with West African governments, calling any criticism of the French presence “disgraceful.”

The region was a colony of France under the name French West Africa from 1895 to 1958, when its components began gaining independence. But Paris has kept significant political and economic interests, especially in oil and uranium. French troops never left the area.

Paris started increasing its troop levels in 2013 after Tuareg fighters and Islamist groups advanced toward Bamako, Mali’s capital. This February, the French government announced the rapid deployment of another 600 soldiers, bringing the total to 5,100. They are also sending over 100 lightly and heavily armored vehicles. Paris said 400 more Special Operations forces from other European countries will arrive by late summer. In addition, the United Nations maintains a 13,000-strong force in Mali.

Washington is discussing reducing its 1,400 troops in the region and possibly closing its drone base in Niger, but no firm decision has been made. The U.S. forces are integrated with the French operation, providing intelligence, aerial refueling and logistics.

Popular opposition to the French rulers’ neocolonial presence is growing in several of the West African countries. In protests in Bamako at the end of 2019 many carried signs reading, “Get out, France! We don’t want to see you here.”

In November Salif Keita, one of Mali’s most popular musicians, released a video telling President Ibrahim Boubacar Keita to “stop subjecting yourself to little Emmanuel Macron.”

Thomas Sankara explained that working people in Africa need to rely on themselves and build a movement to take power. “We are convinced that Upper Volta’s [today Burkina Faso’s] 7 million people represent 7 million politicians capable of running this country,” he said.

Protests demand Washington, Tehran get out of Iraq

Continued from front page

the country. At the same time, the coronavirus began to claim lives across the country while thousands of working people and youth continue to mount protests calling for an end to foreign intervention in Iraq.

The U.S. airstrikes killed six Iraqis and were condemned as a violation of the country’s sovereignty by President Barham Salih. Iraq’s military said those slain included members of the Iraqi military, police force and a civilian, and that several members of the Tehran-backed Popular Mobilization Forces were wounded. Given the strength of Tehran’s influence in the Iraqi government, it’s hard to get the real facts.

The head of Iran’s Supreme National Security Council, Ali Shamkhani, visited Iraq March 7 to press the government to step up efforts to oust U.S. forces from the country.

Iraqi Foreign Minister Mohammed al-Hakim wrote to the U.N. March 17 attacking Washington, saying the actions of the U.S. forces “is only aiming to turn Iraq into a battlefield for regional conflicts.”

But Iraq — like Syria, Lebanon and much of the Middle East — has been

a “battlefield for regional conflicts” for many years. Outside powers like Washington and Moscow, and capitalist regimes like those in Turkey, Iran and Saudi Arabia, have been fighting and maneuvering to assert their economic, political and military interests.

The Iraqi government is in the midst of a serious crisis. Divisions between supporters and opponents of closer ties with Tehran are paralyzing the country’s rulers from being able to name a new prime minister. The last prime minister resigned in the face of monthslong mass protests by workers and youth against intervention by Tehran — and Washington — demanding jobs and government services, and opposing all the regime’s hidebound political blocs.

Marine Gen. Frank McKenzie, head of U.S. Central Command, announced that Washington was responding to the missile attacks on its forces by moving ahead with the deployment of Patriot missiles in Iraq to defend the 5,000 U.S. troops stationed there. He did not get approval from the Iraqi government.

Secretary of State Mike Pompeo March 15 threatened that Washington will carry out more military attacks against Tehran-backed militias, after the Camp Taji base was subject to another round of rocket attacks, injuring U.S. and Iraqi troops.

“The Socialist Workers Party demands the immediate and unconditional withdrawal of all U.S. forces from Iraq and the removal of all other foreign troops intervening there,” Malcolm Jarrett, the SWP’s candidate for vice president, told the *Militant*.

“Our campaign stands in solidarity with the people of Iraq who continue to demonstrate to rid the country of its current government, as well as interference by Tehran and Washington.”

After overthrowing the Saddam Hussein regime in 2003, Washington sought to defend its interests in Iraq by occupying the country and enforcing a sectarian electoral system that continues today. It ensures the dominance of capitalist parties based among the majority Shiite

population, in combination with minority Sunni and Kurdish parties.

Demonstrators demanding Tehran’s forces get out of the country are determined to continue their struggle. They’re angry at the desperate conditions they face while the Iranian rulers and their Iraqi-based militias enrich themselves by expanding control over Iraq’s oil and other resources.

So far “the death toll from the virus is much lower than the number of casualties killed by pro-Iranian militias during the last five months,” Khalil al-Assadi told *al-Monitor* at a protest in Baghdad in early March. In response to the beginning of the spread of coronavirus cases and deaths in Iraq, the government rapidly banned public gatherings. It has used this move to continue deadly assaults on protesters, killing three more demonstrators in Tahrir Square since March 8. Over 500 demonstrators have been killed since the protests began last October.

Rising opposition to the human and financial costs of Tehran’s intervention in bloody conflicts across the region also spurred protests throughout Iran last November and since, which were met with bloody repression.

—MILITANT LABOR FORUMS—

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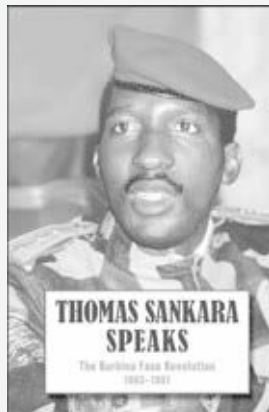
Meet the Socialist Workers Party candidates: Alyson Kennedy for U.S. President and Malcolm Jarrett for Vice President. Fri., March 27. Dinner, 6:30 p.m.; program, 7:30 p.m. 1858 W. Cermak, 2nd floor. Tel.: (312) 455-0111.

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World Capitalist Crisis and U.S. Presidential Elections. Speaker: Ögmundur Jónsson, Communist League. Fri., March 27, 7 p.m. Office 329, 3rd floor, 3 Old Bank Street, M2 7PE. Tel.: (0161) 312-8119.

Further Reading from Pathfinder



Speeches of Thomas Sankara:

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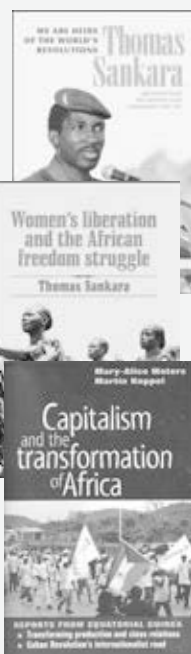
In English, French, Spanish, Farsi. \$5

Also recommended: Capitalism and the Transformation of Africa

by Mary-Alice Waters and Martín Koppel

In English, Spanish, Farsi. \$10

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Nurses, workers lead fight against hospital shutdown

BY BETSEY STONE

DALY CITY, Calif. — Nurses and hospital workers, members of the California Nurses Association and the National Union of Healthcare Workers, have been organizing protests here against the closing of Seton Medical Center, the largest employer in this working-class city of 100,000 just south of San Francisco.

Some 27,000 people are treated in the hospital's emergency room every year. Over 80 percent of the patients at Seton are on Medicare or MediCal.

Verity, the company that owns Seton, filed for bankruptcy in 2018. Citing financial losses, the bosses also threaten to close Seton Coastside, a smaller nursing facility with the only 24-hour emergency room available to coastal communities further south. In January they closed the St. Vincent Medical Center in Los Angeles, giving no warning.

Union members fighting to save the hospital were joined by doctors and community members, as well as Socialist Workers Party presidential and vice presidential candidates Alyson Kennedy and Malcolm Jarrett, at a San Mateo County Board of Supervisors meeting March 10 called to discuss the closure.

Supervisors voted 4-1 to offer \$5 million a year over four years to attract a buyer for the hospital, if one can be found. They made it contingent on the hospital making a profit.

The center has an isolation room equipped to house coronavirus patients. "By closing this hospital, we'd be taking hundreds of doctors and nurses off the line of defense against the coronavirus," Seton physician Warren Chang told the hearing.

There are far from enough hospital beds in the U.S. to treat the growing numbers of coronavirus patients nationwide, on top of those with other illnesses. In fact, there are 47% less hospital beds than there were in 1990. For those in most serious straits, lack of a hospital bed can be a death sentence. Others who spoke said that more people will die because of the greater distance patients will have to travel for emergency care.

Daly City is home to a large Filipino population. Verona Estrada, a nurse in long-term care, characterized it as "the poorest, most often forgotten part of San Mateo County." Referring to plans by Verity bosses to seek alternative uses of the land, she said hospitals should be prioritized over parking lots and housing developments.

"That this is being seriously discussed in the midst of the coronavirus pandemic illustrates the problem we

have, that profits are put ahead of everything in this country," Socialist Workers Party presidential Kennedy told the meeting. "Health care is a class question. If you are rich you don't have a problem getting health care. If you are working class, you see more hospitals closing where you live, in cities and rural areas."

The Socialist Workers Party 2020 campaign platform calls for fighting for "universal, government-guaranteed cradle-to-grave health care" for all, not profit-driven health insurance, riddled with copays and deductibles.

"We need to fight for health care to be a human right," Kennedy said. "That's why we need to build a movement of working people, millions of us. It's the only way anything will change."

Jarrett reported that in his home town of Pittsburgh, thousands of working people were forced to travel long distances to get care after a hospital there closed. He contrasted this to Cuba,



Militant photos by Raul Gonzalez

Above, nurses opposed to closing of Seton hospital in Daly City, California, after county hearing on "alternatives" March 10. Inset, SWP vice presidential candidate Malcolm Jarrett talks with Mee Chen. He and presidential candidate Alyson Kennedy spoke at hearing, saying workers need cradle-to-grave health care for all.



where health care is not a commodity to be bought and sold.

"In Cuba, through their revolution, working people fought and won the right to health care," he said. "They are

organized to take care of all those in the community." To win that here, he said, "will take a fight to emulate their example and take the power out of the hands of the capitalist class."

'Workers are looking to stand up to the bosses'

Continued from front page

what they could do.

"We can use all the support we can get," Donna Borders, who has lived there for over 30 years, told Kennedy when campaign supporters knocked on her door. "Many here are on Social Security. Others have kids. They are not going to be able to afford more rent."

"This is happening more broadly," Kennedy said. "Capitalist landlords have been raising rents everywhere. With wages what they are, workers can't afford that. The only way we'll turn this around is by building a united movement of workers, and breaking any reliance on the promises of the ruling rich and their parties."

The Socialist Workers Party 2020 campaign platform calls for a government-financed public works program, including "quality affordable housing" that workers need, to put millions to work at union-scale wages. Wages like that would ensure workers could pay the rent. To win demands like these will take "organizing and strengthening the unions, and building our own party, a labor party," Kennedy said.

Ed Borders, Donna's husband, joined the discussion. A retired truck driver, he questioned whether unions will help. "They were good in earlier times, but now they're corrupt," he said.

"Workers need unions where we can organize and use our power," Kennedy said. "We have to transform these unions, so we can fight. The unions are weak because the union officials tell workers to rely on Democratic Party politicians who say they are 'friends of labor,' but are part of the capitalist rulers' political system. Our unions need to be rebuilt out of struggles to defend our wages and working conditions and through solidarity with other workers' battles."

"I have leaned toward seeing the Democrats as pro-worker," Ed Borders said. "But I guess they're all politicians. They don't really care about us."

Neighbors from two other apartments joined the discussion. One of them, a landscaper, bought a subscription to the *Militant* that they could all share.

On March 13, Jarrett and Joel Britton, the SWP congressional candidate in District 13, campaigned in West Oakland. Residents there are demanding government action to remove contamination after a carcinogenic chemical was found in the ground water under McClymonds High School.

That same day, Kennedy and Jarrett exchanged views with some San Leandro Walmart workers on how we can fight for our rights today. The workers had signed a card of solidarity with copper miners on strike against Asarco in Arizona and Texas.

In Lathrop, a city in the agricultural San Joaquin Valley 60 miles east of Oakland, the Socialist Workers Party candidates knocked on the door of Raul Villalvazo, who had worked on ranches in California for many years. Villalvazo, 80, told them "the rich people have gotten rich off the land." He liked what they said about the example of Cuba, where workers and farmers made a revolution and took control of their own future, saying he has backed the revolution since he was 18. He subscribed to the *Militant*.

'Virus deepens capitalist crisis'

"Workers won't stop looking for ways to stand up to the bosses' attacks on wages and working conditions, including to the government's criminal response to the coronavirus," Kennedy told a Bay Area-wide campaign

meeting March 14 at a community center here. "The deepening economic crisis wasn't fundamentally caused by the coronavirus, but it has dramatically exacerbated it."

The rapid fall in the stock market, the shutting down of production across the world, and the efforts by capitalist rulers everywhere to put the burden on the backs of working people, exposed the challenges facing us today. In face of the unfolding disaster, the program of the Socialist Workers Party is more important than ever.

"Our campaign points to what working people ourselves can become when we organize and fight together in our own class interests," Kennedy said.

Libby Kiser, a fitness center instructor, endorsed the campaign. "I was with the candidates at the meeting where people were fighting to save the Seton hospital," she said. "One of the people who testified appealed to the politicians and owners closing it, saying they should have a heart. I wanted to yell out, 'No, they don't have a heart.' This campaign shows it's the workers who will change things, that we do have that power."

At the meeting, more than \$2,300 was collected to help fund the campaign. Organizers urged supporters to join in upcoming campaigning and efforts to put the SWP candidates on the ballot in a number of states.

Back Socialist Workers Party 2020 campaign Contribute to \$25,000 fund!

Socialist Workers Party candidates Alyson Kennedy and Malcolm Jarrett are on the campaign trail, speaking at public meetings; talking to working people door to door in cities and towns, small and large; joining social protests; walking picket lines with workers on strike all across the country. Campaign supporters are planning efforts to get on the ballot in a number of states.

To cover the costs of the campaign, the Socialist Workers Party National Campaign Committee has launched a monthlong \$25,000 fund drive from Feb. 24 to March 22.

Any contribution of \$200 or more will be reported in filings with the Federal Election Commission.

Send your contribution today! Make checks out to: Socialist Workers National Campaign. Mail them to 306 W. 37th St., 13th Floor, New York, NY 10018.

Socialist Workers Party campaign button



Available from campaign offices
listed on page 11

SWP candidate in Georgia:

‘We need workers control over production, utilities’

BY SAM MANUEL

JULIETTE, Ga. — Signs were visible in yards all around this rural Georgia town of 1,500 near Macon that read “Georgia Power: Clean Up Your Trash!” when Rachele Fruit, Socialist Workers Party candidate for U.S. Senate, campaigned here March 7.

Some 6 million tons of coal ash is produced each year in Georgia, among the highest in the country, most from 11 Georgia Power coal-fired plants, including the Scherer facility here. The company stores the coal ash, which contains toxic metals such as arsenic, lead, mercury and uranium, in 29 ash ponds.

Judy Sands told the SWP candidate that she has been drinking only bottled water for years. She said there is only one person assigned to test water in her area: “They’re just dragging their feet.” Most residents rely on well water — but she’s still on a waiting list.

“That’s because the capitalists don’t care about us,” Fruit said. Workers and consumers need to get together and fight to make the power bosses open their books. “Workers need to have control of production at our workplaces and utilities like Georgia Power. It’s the only way we can really know what the bosses are doing and can organize an effective fight for safety and against them polluting the environment,” Fruit added.

Sands recently retired from a food packaging plant. She worked for nearly two decades in nearby textile mills, where she was part of efforts to win a union in 1970. “They just didn’t want to pay the money we deserved and change any of the conditions,” she said. At two locations bosses shut down plants to block the union drive. Sands decided to get a subscription to the *Militant*.

When she heard Fruit was running against both Democrats and Republicans, retired registered nurse Vivian Fargason invited Fruit and campaign supporter Janice Lynn into her home.

“I didn’t vote for any of them in the last elections,” she said. “They knew about this coal ash 30 years ago. Why couldn’t they have done something?”

“It wasn’t profitable,” Fruit replied. “Under capitalism that is the bottom line.”

“Georgia Power says they have a ‘third party’ testing the water,” Fargason said. “But Georgia Power is paying this company, so how can they be trusted?”

“I used to be in the middle class,” she said, “but now I know what it is to be poor.” Despite having health insurance, she can’t afford to go to the doctor because of the large copays. “It’s immoral,” she said, explaining one of her neighbors recently died from liver cancer. “When they tested his well water, it came back very elevated in chemicals.”

“The Socialist Workers Party cam-



Militant/Sam Manuel

Rachele Fruit, right, SWP candidate for U.S. Senate from Georgia, speaks with Judy Sands March 7 at her home in Juliette, where power company has contaminated the drinking water.

aign calls for universal, government-guaranteed cradle-to-grave health care and retirement income,” Fruit said. “This is different than calls for Medicare For All, which is just another form of insurance with a bloated government bureaucracy. We are for small govern-

ment — health centers in every neighborhood like they have in Cuba that treat everyone, including practicing preventative medicine to keep people from getting sick. That’s an example of what workers and farmers can accomplish when we make a revolution.”

Socialist Workers Party 2020 campaign platform

This is the SWP’s fighting campaign platform to confront the economic, social and moral crisis caused by capitalism:

UNIONS/FOR A LABOR PARTY Support workers’ struggles to organize to defend themselves, to use union power on behalf of ourselves and all working people. Workers need their own party, a labor party. *One* union for *all* drivers — taxi, Uber, Lyft, other app-based and car service drivers! Support farmworkers in their fight to organize unions and for safe working conditions.

AMNESTY FOR ALL UNDOCUMENTED IMMIGRANTS in the US, a life-and-death question for the unions to unite workers and cut across divisions the bosses use to drive down wages. For access to driver’s licenses for all.

JOBS Fight for a federal government-financed public works program to put millions to work at union-scale wages building roads, bridges, hospitals, child care centers, mass transportation and quality affordable housing workers need. Set the minimum wage to allow workers to have a home and support a family.

OPPOSE WASHINGTON’S WARS US hands off Iran, Venezuela and Cuba. US troops out of Afghanistan, Korea, the Middle East. End US colonial rule in Puerto Rico.

CUBA’S REVOLUTION — AN EXAMPLE End the US rulers’ economic war against Cuba; US out of Guantánamo. The Cuban Revolution in 1959 showed it is possible for workers and farmers to transform themselves in struggle, to take political power and uproot capitalist exploitation.

HEALTH CARE FOR ALL Fight for universal, government-guaranteed cradle-to-grave health care, and retirement income for all.

ABORTION Defend women’s right to unrestricted access to family planning services, including the right to safe, secure abortions.

ISRAEL & PALESTINE For the recognition of Israel and of a contiguous Palestinian state. For the right of Jews to return to Israel as a refuge in the face of capitalist crisis, Jew-hatred and murderous violence.

WORKERS CONTROL OVER PRODUCTION The bosses and their government lie to working people about their production costs and profits, while they insist they can’t afford to pay higher wages. Demand they open their books for inspection by workers and consumers. To prevent capitalist collusion and thievery — and their

production of shoddy and dangerous goods like the Boeing 737 MAX — workers in their millions will need to fight for control of production, a step towards taking political power and a school for running the economy for ourselves in the interests of all.

“JUSTICE” SYSTEM Fight against police brutality, racist discrimination and the entire capitalist injustice system with its frame-ups, “plea bargains,” onerous bail and outrageous prison sentences, all of which disproportionately hit workers who are Black. For the right to vote for ex-prisoners and all workers behind bars.

POLITICAL RIGHTS Defend democratic rights — the right to vote, to free speech and assembly and to bear arms, under attack from Democrats and Republicans alike. Stop FBI and other government spying, harassment and disruption.

PRISONER RIGHTS End solitary confinement. End suppression of the *Militant*, books and newspapers by prison authorities. Abolish the death penalty, an anti-working-class weapon in the hands of the rulers.

FARMERS — WORKERS ALLIES ON THE LAND To put a halt to farm foreclosures, bankruptcies and skyrocketing rural debt, we demand nationalization of the land. This puts the soil at the service of the farmers who till it, as opposed to control by the banks and landlords. We demand the government guarantee farmers their costs of production, including their living expenses.

Working people must organize and act independent of the ruling capitalists and break from their political parties — the Democrats and Republicans. For a labor party and a movement of millions to fight for these demands along a course to replace the rule of the exploitative capitalist class with a workers and farmers government.

Join the Socialist Workers Party campaign!

Vote Socialist Workers Party in 2020! Alyson Kennedy for president Malcolm Jarrett for vice president

SWP candidates coast to coast:

New York/New Jersey

Lea Sherman, US Senate, New Jersey
Willie Cotton, 9th CD, New York
Seth Galinsky, 10th CD, New York
Abby Tilsner, 20th CD, Albany
Jacob Perasso, 21st CD, Albany
Candace Wagner, 8th CD, Union City, NJ

Mid-Atlantic Region

James Harris, delegate to Congress, D.C.
Osborne Hart, 3rd CD, Philadelphia
Ruth Robinett, 14th CD, Washington, PA
Dave Ferguson, 18th CD, Pittsburgh

South

Rachele Fruit, US Senate, Georgia
Anthony Dutrow, 27th CD, Miami

Midwest

Naomi Craine, US Senate, Illinois
Maggie Trowe, US Senate, Kentucky
David Rosenfeld, US Senate, Minnesota
Samantha Hamlin, 3rd CD, Chicago
Samir Hazboun, 3rd CD, Louisville
Helen Meyers, 4th CD, St. Paul

Southwest and West Coast

Henry Dennison, Governor, Washington
Rebecca Williamson, 9th CD, Seattle
Gerardo Sánchez, US Senate, Texas
Joel Britton, 13th CD, Oakland
Dennis Richter, 37th CD, Los Angeles
Deborah Liatos, 40th CD, Los Angeles

See directory on page 11 to contact party campaign office nearest you.

Join the Socialist Workers Party campaign in 2020! Campaign for what you are for, not who you’re against!

- ☐ I want to endorse the Socialist Workers Party ticket of Alyson Kennedy for president and Malcolm Jarrett for vice president.
- ☐ Here is my contribution of \$_____ to help spread the word.
(Make checks to Socialist Workers National Campaign)
- ☐ I would like a 12-week subscription to the *Militant*, the campaign newspaper.
(\$5 enclosed, checks payable to the *Militant*.)

Socialist Workers Party 2020 Campaign, 306 W. 37th St., 13th Floor, NY, NY 10018.
Tel: 347-871-0282 ✉ Email: socialistworkers2020@gmail.com

Virus triggers social crisis

Continued from front page

social fabric for working people. The rulers are imposing isolation on hundreds of millions and curbing our political rights.

They have failed to provide the testing, the treatment and the mass production of medicines that we need to fight to mitigate, and then find a vaccine to halt, the spread of the new virus and drugs that can cure it. In the face of this crisis, caused by the bosses' organization of

CUBA'S EXAMPLE

— see page 12

society around their drive for profits, the rulers continue to leave working people more than ever on their own.

No government — with the exception of revolutionary Cuba — has mobilized resources and organized working people to combat the spread of the virus. None is producing what is urgently needed, from medical equipment to hospital beds or fulfilling food and housing needs. Instead, workers and farmers face mass layoffs and growing shortages as industries and shops, small and large, are shuttered.

Working people have the capacities to resolve these shortages if we can use our collective power to force the government to do so, regardless of the capitalist rulers' greed for profit.

The woefully inadequate number of hospital beds in the U.S. is a disaster,

not to mention the shortages of respirators, ventilators, test kits and drugs that can alleviate some of the threats of the virus. Hospitals are running out of masks, gowns and other equipment essential to protect workers.

All of these closures and shortages have the same cause — the bosses carefully calculate which facilities generate a large enough profit and get rid of the rest. Their class's accumulation of riches takes precedence over the health and lives of working people.

The New York City government ordered a monthlong closure of the public school system March 16 that hit over 1 million students. This places the responsibility for child care, and for two more meals a day, on the backs of working-class families already facing layoffs and loss of benefits.

Anti-social hoarding and black-market price gouging exacerbate the problems workers face in finding and affording basic necessities.

With the growing season coming, farmers face greater problems in getting fertilizer and seed, and can't get enough workers, with the borders locked down.

In fact, if you open the newspaper or turn on the TV, they're crammed with ads for things workers know are impossible, from a trip to Disneyland, a restaurant to eat out at or job-wanted ads.

Lockdowns restrict political space

In San Francisco, Alameda and five other counties across northern Califor-



AP/Ramon Espinosa

MS Braemar crew members hold sign, "I love you Cuba," after Cuban government let ship dock March 18 with passengers with coronavirus, after other Caribbean nations denied it entry.

nia authorities have issued "shelter-in-place" orders — threatening to fine or imprison anyone outside for any reason the authorities deem "nonessential."

Wanda Vázquez, governor of Puerto Rico, has imposed a 9 p.m. to 6 a.m. curfew, enforceable with fines or jail.

There are similar anti-working-class restrictions worldwide. The Ukrainian government banned gatherings of more than 10 people. Several thousand people defied the ban March 14, however, to protest President Volodymyr Zelensky's decision to discuss concessions with Moscow-backed separatist forces in eastern Ukraine.

"What the Ukrainian government is doing in terms of the national interest is

more dangerous than the virus," Yulia Kovtun told the *New York Times*.

And the social crisis unfolding has just begun. The dog-eat-dog competition for profit by capitalist bosses, protected by their governments, along with the crisis of the for-profit "health care" system, pose the question of what must be done.

One key question is whether there is widespread testing for the virus. The U.S. rulers, like most capitalist governments, were utterly unprepared to do testing, and today, weeks after the outbreak developed, allow testing only when someone has symptoms of the disease.

In contrast to the higher mortality rates in the U.S., Italy and elsewhere, so far it is only 0.8% in South Korea. Testing for the virus there is free for anyone with symptoms and only those infected with the disease have been quarantined. Drive-through stations providing test results in hours have enabled over a quarter of a million people to be tested since January. Suspected cases are traced and treated.

Working-class road forward

As long as the bosses and their government call the shots, workers need to find ways to organize and fight for what is needed — government-guaranteed testing; adequate supplies of medical equipment and care for everyone who needs it; long-term weekly government-guaranteed pay; and relief for all who need it.

Working people have proven they have the capacity to fight, push back the bosses and win. Rail workers at Canadian National Railway recently waged an eight-day strike over safety, work schedules and conditions. Walmart workers in Miami successfully won a two-year fight for cashiers, who have to stand all day, to have mats to cushion the concrete floors. In Los Angeles, some Walmart workers are in a constant fight to retain their newly won right to stools to sit on. There are many shop-floor battles like these over wages and working conditions that go unreported today.

We know from history how social struggles like the Black-led civil rights movement overturned Jim Crow segregation, and how Cuban workers and farmers overthrew the U.S.-backed Fulgencio Batista dictatorship in Cuba in 1959, taking political power into their own hands. It's no accident that Cuba today is where the government, the unions and other mass organizations of the people have been successful in fighting the virus by making sure no one on the island is left on their own.

Jobs, lives hit as profit-driven bosses shut operations

BY ROY LANDERSEN

Hundreds of millions of working people in the United States and worldwide are being hit with mounting devastation to the lives and livelihoods of ourselves and our families, due to the capitalist rulers' demonstrated incapacity to contain and reverse today's coronavirus pandemic. Massive shutdowns are already costing workers jobs, and countless more layoffs are to come.

Those still employed — from factories and warehouses, to retail stores, large and small — face profit-driven speedup and pressures to cut corners on health and safety. Managers brand workers who speak up or resist as anti-social. The futures of family farmers, owners of shops and small businesses, and owner-operator truck drivers, already sinking in bank debt, are threatened.

These capitalist breakdowns are multiplying at the very time production on a huge and emergency scale is needed more than ever worldwide: from anti-viral drugs and vaccines to medical equipment; from new hospitals, beds and iso-

lation units to oxygen supplies, ventilators and food. Working people need to organize to fight for the government to take these steps.

World stock, bond and oil markets are swinging wildly, including the steepest falls since the Great Depression of the 1930s. A global recession, or worse, looms. Meanwhile, superrich capitalist investors are panicking, rushing to preserve their wealth by turning fast depreciating paper assets into dollars.

Whatever the amount of the one-off checks the Donald Trump administration and many Republican and Democratic politicians are floating trial balloons about — \$1,000, or even more — this won't cover everyday necessities for working families, let alone emergencies, medical or otherwise, for much more than a couple weeks.

Governments around the world are imposing draconian shutdowns. Travel is barred, borders sealed, quarantines and "shelter-in-place" decrees issued and curbs on public activity and jobs tightened. The brakes on global production and trade are being slammed.

Jobs in the airlines, airports, restaurants, hotels, cruise ships, and entertainment are hit hard. United Airlines bosses warned their 100,000 employees of "painful" job cuts. Management of the Marriott hotel chain has placed tens of thousands on unpaid leave.

Another external shock hit March 9, as an oil price war erupted between the rival capitalist rulers of Saudi Arabia and Russia. With the slump in sea, air and land transport, global petroleum demand was already falling. This shrinking market was flooded with cut-price crude oil by Aramco, the world's biggest producer. Smaller U.S. oil shale companies, with big debts from costly drilling and fracking, are feeling the

squeeze too. Tens of thousands of workers in the industry face layoffs.

Reversal of 'globalization'

The coronavirus emergency registers a turning point in what for years has been dubbed "globalization." After the global recession of 2008-09, the sluggish recovery of output and trade became more dependent on the boom in low-wage manufacturing from China. This year, factory production in China contracted for the first time in three decades, steeply sharpened by the coronavirus crisis.

This disrupted seemingly stable global supply chains for tech companies, carmakers and drug manufacturers. The vulnerability of such long supply lines and "just-in-time" inventories has been pricked. "Globalization" is now shifting into reverse, in face of capital's need for secure sources of parts and materials.

The disastrous results of cutthroat profit maximization is accelerating the coming apart of the European Union and other imperialist pacts, as the rulers defend their rival national interests. To counter these inhuman effects, working people need to find the road to international solidarity, along the road pointed out by the Cuba's socialist revolution.

For decades imperialist governments — in order to postpone or cushion the coming home to roost of capital's long-term falling rate of profit — have cranked out "easy money." Especially since the 2008-09, central banks have pushed interest rates very low, some almost to zero or below.

The bubbles from this artificial, debt-fueled "prosperity" are now rapidly deflating. And the grinding crisis for hundreds of millions of workers and farmers worldwide is suddenly, very suddenly, getting a lot worse.

In New International no. 10
'What the 1987 Stock Market Crash Foretold'
1988 SWP Resolution

"Today, at this advanced point in the stagnation of capital accumulation, any of these partial crises has the growing potential to spiral out of control and trigger a worldwide depression and generalized social crisis."

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75 years since the Holocaust

Continued from front page

Museum of Jewish Heritage in Manhattan about the Nazi concentration camp. Seventy-five years is not long ago, and Poland is not far away. The Holocaust has marked the evolution of world politics ever since.

The exhibit, which is spread out over three floors, is extensive and well-documented. It starts with the Polish town of Oswiecim (Auschwitz in German), the rise of the Nazi Party and its use of Jew-hatred to scapegoat Jews for the crisis afflicting the capitalist rulers in Germany, the onset of the imperialist world war, and the place of the Auschwitz camp in the Nazi's plans for a "final solution" to eliminate the Jews.

Fascism, product of capitalist crisis

Coming out of their defeat in the First World War, the German rulers had been devastated. The victorious imperialist powers — Britain, United States, France and Italy — imposed the vindictive Versailles Treaty that saddled the German government with massive reparations.

One item in the exhibit shows this graphically. In 1910 a 1,000 mark note was worth \$238, in February 1923 a 100,000 mark note was worth \$2.40, in September 1923 a 10 billion mark note was worth \$111. By October a 1 trillion mark note was worth \$15. Runaway inflation devastated the middle and working classes.

The fascist German National Socialist Party, led by Adolf Hitler, emerged in this crisis, drawing on crushed petty bourgeois layers and demoralized workers. It attacked Jews and carried out physical assaults against unions and workers' political organizations. As the crisis of German capitalism deepened, and working-class struggles grew, the capitalist rulers made the decision to back the Nazis to preserve their system.

The reformist Social Democratic Party and Stalinized Communist Party — both large and well-organized parties — refused to join in a united fight to mobilize the working class against the fascist threat. The CP, in the midst of its ultraleft "Third Period," campaigned on the slogan, "After Hitler comes us."

This betrayal of the German workers led to the victory of the Nazis and a stepped-up drive to crush the working class, using Jew-hatred as a key tool. None of this working-class history is reviewed in the exhibit. But describing the fascist party and its rise to power, the exhibit does explain, "Despite the party's name, its focus had little to do with classic socialism and its desire for a classless society; rather the Nazi's focus was the purity of the German or 'Aryan' race."

"Fascism [in Germany] is a product of two conditions: a sharp social crisis on the one hand; the revolutionary weakness of the German proletariat on the other," Leon Trotsky, a central leader of the Russian Revolution who was fighting to continue the revolutionary program of Lenin from exile, wrote in 1931. The exhibit describes Hitler's persecution of the communists, and other working-class organizations and the unions.

The capitalist rulers in Washington and London refused to open their borders to Jews as the fascist assaults against them swept Germany. The Socialist Workers Party in the U.S. launched a call to action in 1938, "Let refugees into the United States! Open the doors to victims of Hitler's Nazi terror!"

After Stalin signed a nonaggression

pact with the Nazis in 1939, Hitler invaded Poland from the west while the Soviets did so from the east. The exhibit shows how Hitler began his first mass murder program in Berlin by killing what he called "useless eaters," those who were disabled or mentally ill.

Auschwitz and the 'final solution'

The exhibit shows how initially concentration camps were set up inside Germany, but once the war started the Nazis needed more camps to ramp up their displacement and killing of Jews and political opponents. Auschwitz was set up in 1940. Alongside the camp, factories were built to use labor from the camp. By mid-1942 the Nazis had decided Auschwitz would play a key role in what they called the "final solution."

With scale models, clothing, actual structures, video clips, and life-sized photos, the exhibit documents the evolution of Auschwitz, how the Nazis systematically dehumanized all those deported there, and took mass killing to an industrial level. By 1943 four crematoria were being used at Auschwitz that could incinerate 4,416 corpses a day. From May to July 1944, over 430,000 Hungarian Jews were brought to Auschwitz. Most were sent to the gas chambers.

Much of the exhibit is built around showing the destruction that is unleashed when the capitalist class resorts to fascism, and the wholesale violence unleashed against the Jews, to save its economic and political system. The ex-



Picture on display at New York exhibit on Holocaust shows train delivering Jews and others to Auschwitz death camp in Poland. One million Jews were killed in gas chambers there.

hibit shows acts of solidarity and resistance by working people, however small — from people hiding Jews in their homes, to prisoners in the camp, not just Jews, maintaining their daily religious rituals and prayers, to prisoners taking pictures of the brutality and murder in the camps and smuggling the film out.

Workers' road against anti-Semitism

One uprising occurred in October 1944 organized by the prisoners who were forced to move dead bodies from the gas chambers to be cremated. The revolt was defeated and participants killed, but it shows even in the most brutal and terrorizing conditions

working people look for ways to assert their humanity and to resist.

The exhibit opens with a quote by Primo Levi, an Italian Jew who survived Auschwitz, stating, "It happened, therefore it can happen again."

The deadly threat of Jew-hatred will remain as long as there is capitalist rule, especially in times of crisis. As Abram Leon, a leader of the communist movement in Belgium during the war, says in *The Jewish Question*, "The disappearance of Hitler can change nothing fundamental in the situation of the Jews." Abram was killed at Auschwitz in 1944. That change can only happen when the working class is organized to lead all the oppressed and exploited to overthrow capitalist rule and put in place a workers and farmers government.

Humanity has not yet recovered from the horrors of the Holocaust. In 1939 the world Jewish population was 16,728,000. In 1945 it was 11,000,000. As of 2018 it is 14,606,000. It's one thing to hear those numbers, but "Auschwitz: Not Long Ago, Not Far Away" is effective at putting on display what that means.

The exhibit at the Museum of Jewish Heritage runs through Aug. 30. Seeing it will deepen your appreciation of what was inflicted on Jews and the working class. To understand why this happened — and a road to prevent it ever happening again — I strongly recommend you get and read Abram Leon's book.



Jew-Hatred in the Epoch of Imperialism

"The disappearance of Hitler can change nothing fundamental in the situation of the Jews. A transitory improvement of their condition will in no wise alter the profound roots of twentieth-century anti-Semitism."

The tragic fate of Judaism mirrors with singular sharpness the situation of all humanity. Capitalism bars the road of the past as well as the highway to the future.

Only the destruction of capitalism will make it possible for humanity to benefit from the immense achievements of the industrial era."

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25, 50, AND 75 YEARS AGO



April 3, 1995

Thousands of working people in the United States — and many more around the globe — celebrated the recent U.S. tour of Sinn Fein president Gerry Adams. The reception he got registered London's weakness in its attempt to hold together the United Kingdom, as well as important new openings to tell the truth about the fight for a united, independent Ireland. The six-month cease-fire in Ulster has provided more elbow-room for working people to debate, discuss and organize for their rights.

Supporters of the Irish struggle now have wider opportunities to spread the message among working people about what is at stake in Ireland, counterposing the truth to British imperialism's lies. Now is the time for all supporters of Irish national unification and independence to intensify the struggle.



April 3, 1970

NEW YORK, March 25 — Striking postal workers voted at 3 p.m. here today to return to work. The vote was taken at a spirited mass meeting. Thus ended a week-long strike, which brought out postal workers across the nation and shattered the myth that workers cannot strike against the federal government. Union officials reported that an "understanding" had been reached on immediate concessions to postal workers.

Morale was high as the workers voted to go back with promised gains. The rank-and-file felt that a new landmark had been set by their struggle; that henceforth the government must deal with postal workers as organized unionists, and that the most urgent need is one big union to represent all postal workers instead of the present seven, weak, divided and conservative craft unions.



March 31, 1945

Two weeks before the Senate hearings on the price control act, lobbyists of the Meat Trust threatened to impose a "meat famine" upon the country unless price ceilings were promptly removed. Last week the Roosevelt administration yielded to the profit-greedy meat barons' brazen threat of enforced scarcity. The government is granting an additional subsidy of 50¢ a hundred pounds to the cattle slaughterers.

The government's generous treatment of the meat profiteers, who openly admitted that 90 percent of the civilian meat supplies have been diverted into black market channels, is in striking contrast to the Roosevelt administration's ferocity against workers forced to strike for a few cents more wages to meet the insatiable demands of the price-gougers.

‘A party whose deeds — as well as words — lead along the road whose goal is workers power’

Three books to be read as one on communist course in US presented to workers, youth in Cuba

Below is the talk by Mary-Alice Waters to a meeting in Cuba presenting three books during the Feb. 6-16 Havana International Book Fair — The Turn to Industry: Forging a Proletarian Party; Tribunes of the People and the Trade Unions; and Malcolm X, Black Liberation, and the Road to Workers Power.

Waters is a member of the National Committee of the Socialist Workers Party and co-editor of the three books. Also speaking at the Feb. 13 event was Silvio Jova, representing the Central Organization of Cuban Workers (CTC).

PRESENTATION BY SOCIALIST WORKERS PARTY LEADER

The three books, published in both English and Spanish, were also the subject of two Feb. 20 meetings organized by the CTC at its national headquarters and nearby administrative center. Staff members, cadres and leaders of the union federation participated in the wide-ranging discussion. (See article by Martín Koppel in March 16 issue of the Militant.) Copyright © Pathfinder Press 2020. Reprinted by permission.

BY MARY-ALICE WATERS

Thank you Silvio for your thoughtful remarks.

And a warm welcome to all of you who are present.

This is an important day for us.

It's a unique opportunity, using the three books whose covers you see here at the front, to introduce the Socialist Workers Party in the United States to you. An opportunity to convey who we are. To explain where we and our sister Communist Leagues in other countries come from. And to outline our communist course of action within the class struggle in the U.S. and the world.

It may come as a surprise to some of you, but we have never had an opportunity to do that here. Nor have we had three new books that present our course as clearly as these three taken together.

I say “new,” but none of the material in these books, including the introductions, is politically new. It will just seem so to many readers. One of the books — *Malcolm X, Black Liberation, and*



Socialist Workers Party leader Mary-Alice Waters (second from left) presented books on communist course in U.S. at Havana book fair and events organized by CTC (Central Organization of Cuban Workers). Above, CTC headquarters Feb. 20. From right, Ismael Drullet, CTC international relations secretary, and Martín Koppel, Waters, Róger Calero from SWP. We're building parties engaged in daily struggles by working people, Waters said.

the Road to Workers Power — was published a decade ago. Even that book you will read with new understanding, however. And you will discover new things in its pages when you realize it could not have been written except as a product of *The Turn to Industry: Forging a Proletarian Party*.

Each of the three books treats the same questions from a different starting point.

Foundation for all three

The Turn to Industry: Forging a Proletarian Party is by Jack Barnes, long-time national secretary of the Socialist Workers Party. It's the foundation on which the other two are built. Without what we call “the turn to industry,” carried out by the cadres of the Socialist Workers Party beginning in the mid-1970s, the line of march and class clarity captured in the other two books would not have been possible.

Tribunes of the People and the Trade Unions contains writings by communist leaders, from Karl Marx, V.I. Lenin and Leon Trotsky to Farrell Dobbs and Jack Barnes today. Drawing lessons from 175 years of revolutionary struggles by working people, these leaders present our communist continuity. They explain why organizing to strengthen

and transform the unions is not only essential to the fighting unity and political striking power of the working class. It is central to building a revolutionary proletarian party as well.

To use Lenin's words, “tribunes of the people” is simply another name for a proletarian party, a party that “reacts to every manifestation of tyranny and oppression, no matter where it appears.” A party of class-struggle deeds that, at the same time, uses every manifestation of capitalist exploitation and oppression to explain why it is workers and our allies who can and will discover our own capacities, our own worth, as we use our collective strength to take on the bosses over wages and job conditions and begin to realize that those who exploit our labor will never act in our interests.

Malcolm X, Black Liberation, and the Road to Workers Power is also by Jack Barnes. The thread running throughout the book is not only the strength and resilience of the oppressed African American nationality in the United States. It also underscores the vanguard place

and weight of workers who are Black in the broad, proletarian-led social and political struggles that have occurred in the U.S., from the Civil War to today. The documented record alone, Barnes says, will “bowl you over.”

Tracing a century and a half of class battles, the book helps us understand how Malcolm X emerged from the rising struggle of African Americans as its most far-sighted leader and became in fact a leader of the entire working class in the U.S. A leader with a revolutionary internationalist perspective.

Nowhere else will you find explained with such clarity why it is only the revolutionary conquest of power by the working class — as you have demonstrated here in Cuba — that will make possible the final battles for Black freedom, and open the way to a world based not on exploitation, violence and racism, but human solidarity. A socialist world.

Books about SWP today

As we prepared together for our presentation today, Silvio remarked to us



Strike pickets at Co-Op coal mine in Huntington, Utah, December 2003. Sign says: “If you cross to avoid losing your car or your house, keep in mind that what you are about to lose is your soul.” The strikers, mostly Mexican immigrants, won solidarity from workers across the United States.



Kenia Serrano, right, leader of Cuba's Federation of University Students, talks with striking UAW members at Caterpillar plant in York, Pennsylvania, during U.S. speaking tour by Serrano and Rogelio Polanco in 1995. The Cuban youth learned about U.S. class struggle and explained example of Cuba's socialist revolution to workers.

that he had worked with comrades of the SWP for a year or more. He has read the four books he joined us in presenting last year by former party National Secretary Farrell Dobbs on the union battles led by the party in the 1930s — *Teamster Rebellion*, *Teamster Power*, *Teamster Politics* and *Teamster Bureaucracy*. Silvio said he thought he knew us a little and was prepared for what he would read in the books we're presenting today.

But he was still surprised, he said, when he read *The Turn to Industry: Forging a Proletarian Party*.

“The labor struggles of the 1930s took place 80-90 years ago. They are part of history,” he commented. “But *The Turn to Industry* is different. It's about the SWP today. And it's explained so well.”

Silvio is correct, and I hope it is the main thing you take with you from this discussion. The turn to industry the party carried out at the end of the 1970s and early 1980s is what forged the SWP — and the political course and clarity of its cadres — today.

Throughout the 1960s and early 1970s, the party and its affiliated youth organization, the Young Socialist Alliance, had grown rapidly. We recruited large numbers of new members who had been won to the revolutionary working-class movement as students fighting Jim Crow segregation, North and South.

Many more were won as the party led and organized massive opposition in the streets to Washington's war against the Vietnamese people. And as we fought to lead the growing women's liberation movement on a working-class course,

as well as fights around many other social issues.

From the day we joined, however, we took it for granted that as the class struggle sharpened, we would organize to get jobs in industry and work to strengthen the trade unions as instruments of class struggle. That we would join in fights for wages and safety on the job, as well as organize with co-workers to carry into the unions political campaigns the party was involved in around social questions of importance to the working class. That we would help mobilize workers in factories, mines and mills to think socially and act politically, as part of the broad struggles advancing in the U.S. at the time.

That was the only course consistent with the entire history of the communist movement we had joined. The only course consistent with everything we had learned from the generations of battle-tested leaders of the working class — James P. Cannon, Ray Dunne, Farrell Dobbs — who recruited and educated us.

Forging a proletarian party

By the mid-1970s, U.S. capital had begun a ferocious drive to break the most powerful unions, including in coal and steel, and to increase their competitive edge over capitalist rivals worldwide. Working-class resistance was mounting. Recognizing the opportunity — and the necessity — to act, the party's National Committee adopted proposals presented to them in a report by Jack Barnes. The first article in *The Turn to Industry* is



SWP candidates for president, Alyson Kennedy, right, and vice president, Malcolm Jarrett, left, join autoworkers' picket line in Arlington, Texas, during GM strike in September 2019.



Steelworkers Local 8888 members Nov. 12, 1979, during successful fight to organize union at Newport News, Virginia, shipyard. Battle registered strengthening of U.S. working class, a product of mass Black-led struggles that brought down institutionalized race segregation in South.

that February 1978 report, “Leading the Party into Industry.”

Most importantly, the party cadre, almost to a person, implemented that report with enthusiasm. It was the moment we had been waiting for.

We had already learned, from our own experiences, what is explained in one of the SWP's most important documents, adopted on the eve of Washington's entry into World War II: “We will not succeed . . . in defending the revolutionary proletarian principles of the party from being undermined unless the party is an overwhelmingly proletarian party, composed in its decisive majority of workers in the factories, mines and more.”

That's what the turn to industry was — and is — about.

By the early 1980s virtually every member of the party, and every nonstudent member of the YSA, was engaged

in union and political actions together with other workers in auto plants, steel mills, rail yards, packinghouses, garment shops, textile mills, mines, oil refineries and more. The only cadres not in industry were those assigned to full-time work for the party — on the *Militant* staff, in our print shop, and a small number who had been elected to national political leadership responsibilities. When comrades were rotated out of those assignments, moreover, they joined one of the party's union fractions, and others who had been in industry stepped in to relieve them.

Participants in the party's leadership school, begun in 1980, were chosen on the basis of leadership demonstrated in the turn and its related mass work.

The rich lessons of the first years of the turn — enhanced with a wealth of photos capturing some of the important

Continued on page 10

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Working-class party today

Continued from page 9

experiences party cadres were part of — is what *The Turn to Industry* records.

You'll be interested to learn that leaders of Cuba's Union of Young Communists were part of this too. One photo you'll find in *The Turn to Industry* is of 21-year-old Kenia Serrano, who more recently served as president of the Cuban Institute for Friendship with the Peoples for some eight years. At the time of the photo she was international relations secretary of the Federation of University Students. It shows her talking with striking United Auto Workers union members in York, Pennsylvania, while she was on a six-week speaking tour in the U.S. in 1995.

Rogelio Polanco, Cuba's former ambassador to Venezuela and now Dean of the Higher Institute of International Relations, was part of that tour for three weeks as well. In addition to speaking on some 50 college campuses, in 13 states and 28 cities, including Miami, they took part in a dozen trade union and workplace activities, such as meeting the UAW strikers in Pennsylvania and touring a Ford assembly plant in St. Paul, Minnesota.

Combating class collaboration

The political and economic factors that pushed working-class struggles and

the labor movement to center stage in the 1970s and '80s do not exist today. In face of unrelenting attacks by the capitalist class, its government, and its parties — on wages, working conditions and democratic rights — the working class and labor movement have been in retreat for more than two decades. Union membership in privately owned workplaces has plunged from more than 20 percent when the party's turn to industry began to 6.5 percent today.

What is the reason for the decline of the union movement? Above all, it is the integration of the union officialdom into the imperialist state apparatus, through the two large capitalist parties, the Democrats and Republicans. This is what Trotsky explains so clearly in "Trade Unions in the Epoch of Imperialist Decay," one of the central articles in *Tribunes of the People and the Trade Unions*.

The course of the union officialdom today is not one of mobilizing union power to defend the working class. To the contrary, their "strategy" — if such a word can be used to describe it — is to rely on the passage of hoped-for "pro-labor" legislation by capitalist politicians, in return for all-out electoral backing organized and financed by the union apparatus. With few exceptions, that translates



Bohemia

Coffins symbolizing U.S. firms nationalized by revolutionary government are carried by workers to be thrown in sea, Havana, August 1960. Expropriations strengthened expanding workers control of workplaces after 1959 revolution. SWP exists today, Waters said, thanks to Cuba's socialist revolution and party's course of action registered in its turn to industry.

into support for the Democratic Party, one of the two imperialist parties.

For these labor misleaders, organizing the unorganized — or waging anything other than choreographed strikes, the outcome of which has already been decided with the bosses behind closed doors before the strike begins — jeopardizes their political alliances. That is, it threatens their own comforts and well-cushioned life style.

The four-decade relentless assault by the U.S. capitalist class will continue until it meets stiff resistance from sections of the working class. But the laws of capital have not changed. Sooner or later the bosses will try to push too far, sustained battles will erupt, and the retreat will end.

We can already say the opportunities and political openness to the course of action we present — in all our work on the job and in working-class neighborhoods, in both cities and countryside — has seldom been greater. Openness to the *Militant*, to books like these published by Pathfinder Press, to SWP election campaigns like the nationwide presidential ticket of Alyson Kennedy and Malcolm Jarrett we're running in 2020.

And that openness is greatest precisely among those whom the rulers and their privileged servants of the professional and upper middle classes demean as "deplorables," "criminals," "illegals" or just plain "trash."

For us, they are our people. We come from them. We are part of them.

We are confident, moreover, that whenever the class struggle does sharpen, the SWP will be ready. Because for us, the turn to industry was never a shortcut. It was never an ultraleft gimmick, as it was in the 1960s and '70s for many Maoist groups and other leftist parties in the U.S. and elsewhere around the world.

For the SWP, the turn was simply the extension of the working-class line of march we were already on. It was what we had learned from the party cadres who had led working-class battles in the 1930s. And from those who in 1919 had helped found the American section of the newly organized Communist International.

It was what we had already learned ourselves from the two most important battles that shaped our generations.

One of those battles, one with a truly revolutionary character, was the mass movement led by Black proletarian cadres that brought down the entire edifice

of Jim Crow racial segregation. For the better part of a century, it had been the single greatest barrier to the fighting unity of the U.S. working class.

The second was what we learned from Cuba's victorious socialist revolution and our battle to defend it.

That's the point I will end on.

Cuba and American revolution

For "the turn generations" of the SWP, the Cuban Revolution has always been "our revolution." In much the same way the October Revolution in Russia was the decisive historical event that shaped the trajectory of the founders of the communist movement in the U.S. and elsewhere. We studied and absorbed the lessons of October too, including lessons of the Stalinist counterrevolution against Lenin's internationalist course, for which the working class has paid an enormous price the world over.

But the Cuban Revolution was not only something we studied. It was something we lived.

Jack Barnes, the principal author of these three books, often recounts the importance of the time he spent in Cuba in the summer of 1960, as working people there were carrying out the sweeping nationalization of U.S.-owned factories, utilities and other imperialist holdings. Everyone already knew a U.S.-organized invasion was coming. It was only a matter of when, and the militias were urgently training to meet it. "Learn in the morning. Teach in the afternoon" was the watchword. Jack's response was that he wanted to stay to fight against the inevitable assault.

One of the Cubans Jack had come to respect most — an officer of the Rebel Army — told him, "No. That's not the help we need. We'll meet the invasion whenever it comes and defeat it. The important thing is for you to go back to the United States and organize to make a revolution there, like we're doing here."

And that is what the author of these books did. He went back to the U.S. and joined the party whose deeds — as well as words — proved its cadres had always been on that class trajectory. The only party for whom emulating the Cuban Revolution already had meaning in our day-to-day political lives.

That party is the Socialist Workers Party. And we exist today thanks to the Cuban Revolution and thanks to the turn to industry and course of action you will encounter in these three books.

A book about the road to workers power



Militant/Jacque Henderson

Socialist Workers Party member Samir Hazboun, right, and William Monroe in Louisville, Kentucky, Feb. 16, 2019, discuss the party; the *Militant*; Malcolm X, *Black Liberation*, and the *Road to Workers Power* (at left) and other books.

The following excerpt is taken from the introduction to Malcolm X, *Black Liberation*, and the *Road to Workers Power* by Jack Barnes, national secretary of the Socialist Workers Party. Copyright © 2009 by Pathfinder Press. Reprinted by permission.

This is a book about the dictatorship of capital and the road to the dictatorship of the proletariat.

A book about the last century and a half of class struggle in the United States — from the Civil War and Radical Reconstruction to today — and the unimpeachable evidence it offers that workers who are Black will comprise a disproportionately weighty part of the ranks and leadership of the mass social movement that will make a proletarian revolution.

It is a book about why this revolutionary conquest of state power by a politically class-conscious and organized vanguard of the working class — millions strong — is necessary. About why that new state power provides working people the mightiest weapon possible to wage the ongoing battle to end Black oppression and every form of exploitation and human degradation inherited from millennia of class-divided society. And how participation in that struggle itself changes them to the point they are politically capable of carrying that battle through to the end.

This is a book about the last year of Malcolm X's life. About how he became the face and the authentic voice of the forces of the coming American revolution. ...

Only the conquest, and exercise, of state power by the working class and expropriation of finance capital can lay the foundations for a world based not on exploitation, violence, racial discrimination, class-based pecking orders, and dog-eat-dog competition, but on solidarity among working people that encourages the creativity and recognition of the worth of every individual, regardless of sex, national origin, or skin color.

A socialist world.

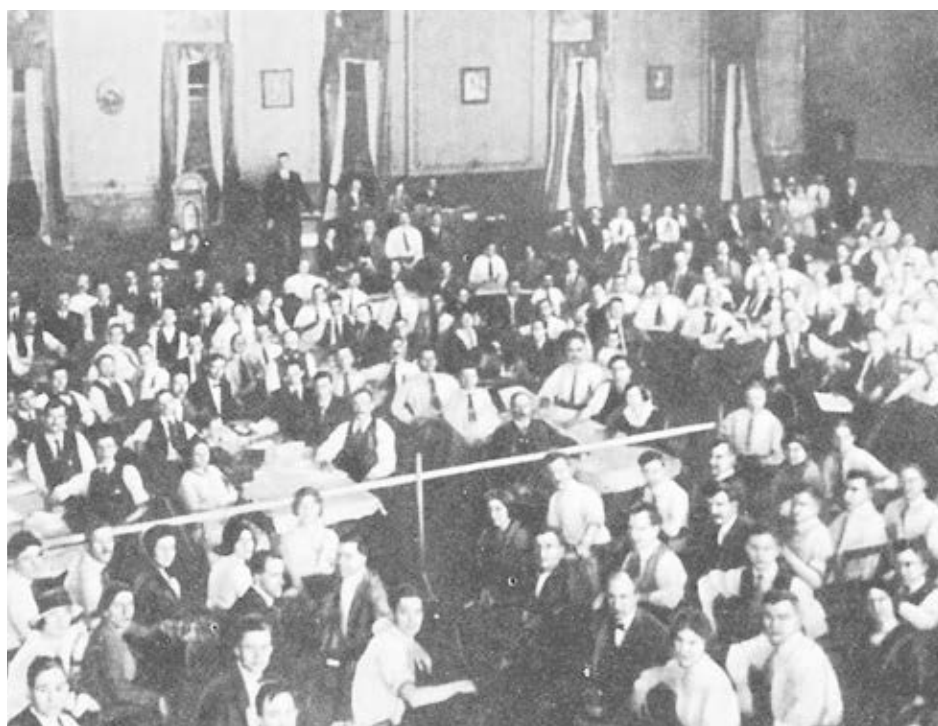
Founders of US Communist Party aimed to lead workers to power

The First Ten Years of American Communism by James P. Cannon is one of Pathfinder's Books of the Month for March. Cannon was a founding leader of the Communist Party of the United States in 1919 following the Russian Revolution. As revolutions internationally went down to defeat, the isolated Soviet government and the parties of the Communist International underwent a bureaucratic degeneration in a counterrevolution led by Joseph Stalin. Cannon was expelled from the CP in 1928 for supporting Leon Trotsky's fight to continue V.I. Lenin's revolutionary course. He led the communist current that became the Socialist Workers Party. The excerpt is from "Part 1: Letters to a Historian. My Thesis." Copyright © 1962 by Pathfinder Press. Reprinted by permission.

BOOKS OF THE MONTH

BY JAMES P. CANNON

The Communist Party originally was a revolutionary organization. All the original leaders of the early Communist Party, who later split into three permanent factions within the party, began as American revolutionists with a perspective of revolution in this country. Otherwise, they wouldn't have been in the movement in the first place and wouldn't have split with the reformist socialists to



Above, delegates at 1919 founding convention of U.S. Communist Party. Degeneration of the party began after early years, Cannon said, "when it abandoned perspective of revolution in this country" and became "a cheering squad for the Stalinist bureaucracy in Russia."

organize the Communist Party.

Even if it is maintained that some of these leaders were careerists — a contention their later evolution tends to support — it still remains to be explained why they sought careers in the communist movement and not in the business or professional worlds, or in bourgeois politics, or in the trade-union officialdom. Opportunities in these fields were open to at least some of them, and were deliberately cast aside at the time.

In my opinion, the course of the leaders of American communism in its pioneer days, a course which entailed deprivations, hazards and penalties, can be explained only by the assumption that they were revolutionists to begin with; and that even the careerists among them believed in the future of the workers' revolution in America and wished to ally themselves with this future.

It is needless to add that the rank and file of the party, who had no personal interests to serve, were animated by revolutionary convictions. By that I mean, they were believers in the perspective of revolution in this country, for I do not know any other kind of revolutionists.

The American Communist Party did not begin with Stalinism. The Stalinization of the party was rather the end result of a process of degeneration which began during the long boom of

the Twenties. The protracted prosperity of that period, which came to be taken for permanence by the great mass of American people of all classes, did not fail to affect the Communist Party itself. It softened up the leading cadres of that party, and undermined their original confidence in the perspectives of a revolution in this country. This prepared them, eventually, for an easy acceptance of the Stalinist theory of "socialism in one country."

For those who accepted this theory, Russia, as the "one country" of the victorious revolution, became a substitute for the American revolution. Thereafter, the Communist Party in this country adopted as its primary task the "defense of the Soviet Union" by pressure methods of one kind or another on American foreign policy, without any perspective of a revolution of their own. All the subsequent twists and turns of Communist policy in the United States, which appears so irrational to others, had this central motivation — the subordination of the struggle for a revolution in the United States to the "defense" of a revolution in another country.

That explains the frenzied radicalism of the party in the first years of the economic crisis of the Thirties, when American foreign policy was hostile to the Soviet diplomacy; the reconciliation with Roosevelt after he rec-

ognized the Soviet Union and oriented toward a diplomatic rapprochement with the Kremlin; the split with Roosevelt during the Stalin-Hitler pact; and the later fervent reconciliation and the unrestrained jingoism of the American Stalinists when Washington allied itself with the Kremlin in the war.

The present policy of the Communist Party, its subordination of the class struggle to a pacifistic "peace" campaign, and its decision to ally itself at all costs with the Democratic Party, has the same consistent motivation as all the previous turns of policy.

The degeneration of the Communist Party began when it abandoned the perspective of revolution in this country, and converted itself into a pressure group and cheering squad for the Stalinist bureaucracy in Russia — which it mistakenly took to be the custodian of a revolution "in another country."

I shouldn't neglect to add the final point of my thesis: The degeneration of the Communist Party is not to be explained by the summary conclusion that the leaders were a pack of scoundrels to begin with; although a considerable percentage of them — those who became Stalinists as well as those who became renegades — turned out eventually to be scoundrels of championship caliber; but by the circumstance that they fell victim to a false theory and a false perspective.

What happened to the Communist Party would happen without fail to any other party, including our own, if it should abandon its struggle for a social revolution in this country, as the realistic perspective of our epoch, and degrade itself to the role of sympathizer of revolutions in other countries.

I firmly believe that American revolutionists should indeed sympathize with revolutions in other lands, and try to help them in every way they can. But the best way to do that is to build a party with a confident perspective of a revolution in this country.

Without that perspective, a Communist or Socialist party belies its name. It ceases to be a help and becomes a hindrance to the revolutionary workers' cause in its own country. And its sympathy for other revolutions isn't worth much either.

That, in my opinion, is the true and correct explanation of the Rise and Fall of the American Communist Party.

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A call to action to meet unfolding crises

Continued from front page

all those who fall ill. We must demand emergency relief for the working class, farmers, small shop owners, and other exploited producers under the hammer blows of lockdowns and layoffs struck by the bosses, their government, and their Democratic and Republican parties.

We must reject the draconian social isolation the rulers are seeking to impose on working people. Whatever health measures may be required under specific conditions, what workers need above all is class solidarity and united action to demand solutions to what we face.

Call on the government to construct emergency hospitals, provide beds and expand the production of medical equipment and supplies — *now!* Increase the training of workers to treat those infected and massively expand testing for the virus — *now!*

COVID-19 is a disease, with scientifically knowable causes, vaccines, and cures. There’s nothing “natural” about today’s worldwide crisis, however. It is a pure product of the profit-driven bosses and capitalist governments that serve them.

The propertied rulers want us to believe the social calamity we face is caused by a mutant virus, and all we can do is wait it out, let enough “carriers” die and hope we aren’t one of them. But class-conscious workers have an opposite moral and political compass. We keep looking for ways to advance the interests of humanity’s toiling majority, as we stand up to bosses’ attacks on our wages, job conditions and constitutional rights.

Workers at a Chicago-area Walmart this year, for example, refused to work in a tire and lube pit contaminated by raw sewage, despite the bosses’ insistence — and won a victory.

Workers at a store in New York state got together and pushed back efforts to force them to take lunch breaks at a time convenient to management, not when they were hungry and needed a break.

In each of these fights, workers won support and solidarity from other working people, who knew only too well how bosses try to make *us* pay for *their* crisis. By fighting, these workers strengthened both themselves and others. They showed we *can* rely on our own capacities for common action. In face of the crisis bearing down on us right now, we need to be at work, *together with fellow workers*, in order to multiply such resistance.

Demand that the government provide immediate jobless benefits for all workers, farmers and other exploited producers, for as long as they need it! *Weekly unemployment relief* that working people can depend on — not just a one-time check in the mail that falls far short of what is needed.

Jobless workers need such benefits, regardless of what kind of work they’d been doing. No matter where they live — in a big city, small town, or rural areas. Whether or not they have “papers” the rulers demand in order to be “legal.” Whether these workers had been “permanent,” “temporary” or “self-employed.”

In face of sudden job cuts and health emergencies, it’s essential to ensure that no worker or their family is left by the bosses to fend for themselves. It’s is a precondition to strengthening the solidarity and combativity of our class.

The working class and unions need to fight for a government-funded public works program to put millions to work at union-scale wages — building hospitals, housing, and other facilities working people need.

From the polio epidemic and outbreak of the HIV virus in the last century, medical treatments have been developed to protect human beings from such deadly scourges.

We need to demand a crash government program to greatly expand the resources to produce a coronavirus vaccine, as well as medicines to ameliorate the conditions and cure those infected. Such vital work can’t be left to profit-driven decisions and priorities by the owners of giant drug companies, nor to billion-dollar federal bonanzas for their coffers.

It is the capitalist government’s responsibility to mount an immediate and compulsory mobilization to produce a vaccine, using all the scientific and technological advances available. What’s more, steps for-

ward in developing vaccines and treatments must be shared with those who need it around the world, not wrapped up in patents and “intellectual property” red tape at the cost of hundreds of thousands of lives.

Price gouging by profiteers, anti-social hoarding, turning your back on others in need — all these are by-products of the panic and fear bred by the rulers’ refusal to take the necessary measures. Such cowardice and fear are especially rampant today among middle class and professional layers.

But resolute action by the working class and unions can counter these anti-working-class attitudes and acts by pointing a way forward.

Workers organizing together to fight the bosses is the foundation on which all other progress rests. A war footing is necessary to confront today’s deepening capitalist crisis and its consequences. Not a war for superprofits of the ruling class in the U.S. and around the world, like the wars workers have experienced throughout our lives and of those who came before us. But a battle to win protection for the working class and our oppressed and exploited allies, here and all over the world.

As we gain confidence in ourselves and fellow workers, we can rebuild our badly weakened unions and begin *using* union power once again.

We can establish our own party, a labor party that helps us organize and fight politically for these demands. A revolutionary party that speaks — *and above all, acts* — for all working people.

And we will develop the courage, class consciousness and battle-tested experience and savvy needed to build a movement of millions. A movement to overturn rule by the capitalist exploiters, replace it with a workers and farmers government, and march arm in arm with our sisters and brothers everywhere toward a socialist world.

Back Asarco strikers

Continued from front page

United Steelworkers, Teamsters and five other unions. Instead it imposed its “last, best and final” contract. Asarco has kept some production going with some 300 workers who have crossed the picket lines, replacement workers, nonunion contractors and supervisors.

Like many strikers, David Copeland, who worked at Asarco’s Mission and Ray mines for 20 years, has had to get another job to help make ends meet.

On his days off, he does picket duty at the Silver Bell Mine in Marana, Arizona. “Picket lines have been filling up with new faces,” he told the *Militant* by phone March 16. “Strikers who were AWOL the first few months are coming out picketing.”

Asarco has been pressing the National Labor Relations Board to decertify USW Local 937 as the union representing the workers at the Silver Bell Mine. Nearly 150 workers are employed there. The company says over 90% have crossed the picket line and that only the 11 workers on strike are members of the union.

The unions reported March 11 that the NLRB “rejected a petition by Asarco to prompt an election to remove the USW as the representative of Silver Bell employees.” The company is appealing the ruling. The NLRB has still not ruled on the unions’ unfair labor practices petition. Asarco is owned by Grupo Mexico, one of the world’s largest mining conglomerates.

Solidarity with the strikers is crucial. According to USW Local 886, the union pantry at the 915 union hall in Kearny, Arizona, was forced to close March 16 “until further notice” because large grocery chains are “limiting their stock.” The limits are a result of the run on their supplies from people panic-buying for fear of the coronavirus outbreak.

Send financial contributions and solidarity messages to USW Local 915 Strike Assistance, P.O. Box 550, Kearny, AZ 85137; USW Local 5252 Strike Assistance, P.O. Box 896, Kearny, AZ 85137; USW Local 5613, 4230 Texas Hwy 136, Amarillo, TX 79108; or via paypal.me/palfcommunityservice for Tucson-area strikers. Solidarity messages can be sent to palfchair@gmail.com. Contribute to the food pantries at: USW 915 and 886 hall, 107 Hammond Dr., Kearny; IBEW Local 570 hall, 750 S. Tucson Blvd., Tucson; USW Local 5613, 4230 Texas Hwy 136, Amarillo, Texas.

Cuba’s revolution: Example of solidarity, fight against virus

BY TERRY EVANS

Capitalist rulers the world over are leaving millions to fend for themselves in the face of the explosion of coronavirus and the social consequences — spreading layoffs, loss of a paycheck, disappearing places to get necessities and uncertainty about the future.

Their profit-driven actions stand in stark contrast to the conduct of the revolutionary government of Cuba, where workers and farmers in power have sharply counterposed values to those where the bosses rule.

In the place of travel bans and “lockdowns in place”— which isolate workers from one another — the Cuban government has mobilized working people to conquer the disease. It organizes meetings in workplaces, unions and neighborhoods to discuss the virus. Neighborhood medical personnel are expanding checks at people’s homes. Alongside preventive measures, the government has prepared for the likely spread of the disease for weeks, establishing special treatment facilities and quarantine centers.

There are 7.7 doctors per every 1,000 Cubans, the highest ratio of any country in the world. They are based in the neighborhoods where those they treat live, treating them with dignity and respect — as patients, not as customers.

Training sessions in schools to prevent the spread of the disease have been organized for teachers and other workers, side by side with the students. This preparation includes medical workers based in the schools and collaboration with parents.

The character of health care in Cuba is not a product of a benevolent government bestowing much-needed rights, like health care, on working people, but of a government formed by working people.

Led by Fidel Castro, workers and farmers built a revolutionary movement that overthrew the U.S.-backed dictator Fulgencio Batista in 1959. They went on to establish their own government, and used their power to nationalize the factories, banks and the land.

During the revolutionary war the Rebel Army organized working people to take charge of the organization of health care — as well as education, justice and land reform — as they were fighting the Batista regime. Clinics and field hospitals were set up, treating not only Rebel Army members, but also wounded soldiers from Batista’s forces and local residents — many receiving health care for the first time in their lives.

Working people were changed through these struggles, becoming capable of doing things they had always been “taught” were impossible, including defending their conquests from Washington’s six-decades-long drive to overturn their socialist revolution.

Cuba has 28,268 workers on volunteer medical brigades in 61 countries. They treat people in remote rural areas and working-class neighborhoods that for-profit health care providers stay away from.

Far from scaling back international solidarity, the Cuban government has agreed to requests from other countries to send them doctors and nurses to treat those with coronavirus. The health minister of Lombardy, the region in Italy with the highest rate of infection, reports that Cuban medical personnel are on the way.

Some 400 medical volunteers from the Henry Reeve International Brigade have been given special training for missions abroad.

After the British cruise ship MS Braemar — with a small number of people infected with coronavirus — was turned away by authorities in Bermuda, the Bahamas and the Dominican Republic, the Cuban government allowed the ship to dock. Cuban authorities will provide medical checks for passengers and treat those who need it before they fly home. Passenger Anthea Guthrie tweeted, “We will never forget that Cuba answered us when absolutely no one else would.”

Opponents of the revolution in the U.S., like Miami-Dade County Commissioner Esteban Bovo, are seeking to intensify the U.S. economic war on Cuba’s revolutionary government by urging Washington to cancel all flights to and from Cuba, alleging Cuba is “ill-prepared” for the epidemic.

This is a bald-faced lie. Workers in the U.S. and elsewhere will, through their own class-struggle experiences, learn they can emulate the Cuban Revolution.